



euro|guidance  
European Network to Support  
Guidance and Counselling



*Ministero del Lavoro  
e delle Politiche Sociali*

DIREZIONE GENERALE PER LE POLITICHE ATTIVE,  
I SERVIZI PER IL LAVORO E LA FORMAZIONE



# Lifelong Guidance in Italy

EUROGUIDANCE ITALY

In recent years, a number of reforms in the fields of education, training and employment have entrusted the task of providing career guidance by different actors coordinated by the Ministry of Education, University and Research and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. They are: schools, universities, public and private vocational training centres, Public Employment Services (PES).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies is committed to developing a general policy regulation in order to create an organic National Guidance System that takes into account the targets of different users and guarantees a service of high quality. The Ministry is also committed to designing and implementing a national plan, whose aim is to bring high quality standards to all guidance services and activities and to distribute them equally all over the territory. In order to ensure a strong coherence between the national policy and the national and EU policies on Education, Vocational Training and Employment, the following actions are planned: creation of a permanent guidance observatory, development and promotion of models and tools, projects targeted at disadvantaged people, analysis and promotion of high-standard activities.

In terms of integrating of activities and streamlining of guidance services and provisions, in the perspective of structuring the Italian National System, a relevant step forward is represented by the Agreement between Government, Regions and local Entities. Approved during the Unified Conference on 20 December 2012, upon proposal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies,

the Agreement regards the definition of a “National System for Guidance<sup>1</sup>”, following the “Guidelines of the National Lifelong Guidance System”, approved during the Unified Conference on 5th December 2013. And, finally, the Agreement between Government, Regions and local Entities, approved during the Unified Conference on 13 November 2014, on the: “Definition of the minimum standards of services and competences of guidance professionals based on the functions and services of guidance existing at the moment in territorial contexts and in the Education, Training and Labour systems<sup>2</sup>”.

From a conceptual point of view, in Italy life-long guidance is considered as an integral part of education and training and a vital resource for individuals to build and develop their life and career plans. Lifelong guidance accompanies individuals throughout their lives and aims to support them in managing and planning their cultural and career development, in line with their personal skills, motivation and interests.

Guidance is considered, therefore, as an individual asset since it is the organising principle behind the life plan of individuals who are capable of actively interacting in a social context. It is also viewed as a collective asset, since it is an instrument that promotes the country’s success in terms of training, learning and economic development.

1 [www.lsf.it/temi/Lavoro\\_professioni/copy\\_of\\_progetti/orientamento-al-lavoro/accordo-statoregioni-del-20-dicembre-2012](http://www.lsf.it/temi/Lavoro_professioni/copy_of_progetti/orientamento-al-lavoro/accordo-statoregioni-del-20-dicembre-2012).

2 [www.statoregioni.it/Documenti/DOC\\_045564\\_136%20CU%20PUNTO%20%202%20ODG.pdf](http://www.statoregioni.it/Documenti/DOC_045564_136%20CU%20PUNTO%20%202%20ODG.pdf).

Some significant information about Italy:

## 1. Population and demographic balance

According to ISTAT (census data), in 2011 the Italian population was almost 60 million. The slight population increase that has occurred in the last few years was due mainly to the migratory flows that counterbalanced to some extent by the drop in the birth rate and population ageing. The dependency rate for aged people was slightly higher for Italy (30.78%) than the corresponding EU27 in 2010; the projections for the next years show that it will increase progressively, maintaining a positive gap compared to the European population and will eventually rise to 50% in 2040. The birth rate was 9.3% in 2010 and the number of births (561,944) decreased with respect to 2008, but was one of the highest since 1993. This increase is however due to fertility rate of migrant women, which is higher than that of Italians. These dynamics underline the need for a progressive perspective change in the organisation and distribution of resources among the different sub-systems which constitute the national lifelong learning and guidance system to promote the socio-cultural integration of migrants on one hand and active ageing of the population on the other.

## 2. Employment rate, industries and geographical challenges

The Italian economy, after a slight recovery in 2010, entered a new recession in the second half of 2011. The production system structure is based on the prevalence of small and me-

dium-sized enterprises<sup>3</sup>. The economic scenario continues to be divided between the developed industrial North, where most of the private companies are located, and a less developed South where an infrastructure gap still exists.

Under the negative impact of the economic crisis, the unemployment rate increased. According to data provided by the Italian Statistical Office (Istat), between 2008 and 2013 more than 1 million jobs were lost in Italy, while the share of unemployed labour force increased by 1.5 million people, reaching a total of 3 million during the third quarter of 2013. The decrease in employment levels involved almost all age groups and the only exception was the group of people aged between 55 and 64, whose employment rate increased by more than 6 percentage points, mainly due to the reform of the pension system introduced in 2012.

The crisis affected in particular the younger generation. Generally speaking, the Italian labour market has been characterised for many years by a high structural component of youth unemployment, a result of the highly complicated pathways to the labour



<sup>3</sup> In 2008, before the onset of the crisis, out of a total of just over 4.5 million enterprises belonging to the industry and services sector, which employed about 17.9 million people, companies employing less than 10 people accounted for 95% (4.3 million) and employed 46% of all employees. In addition, almost 21% of employees (nearly 3.8 million) worked in small enterprises (10 to 49 employees) and 12.5 per cent (2.2 million) in medium-sized enterprises (50 to 249 employees). Only 3,735 enterprises (0.08 per cent) employed 250 workers and over, although they absorbed 20% of total employment (about 3.6 million people).

market that young people must face. In 2008, compared to a general unemployment rate of 6.7% (average figure in 2008), the 15-24 age group recorded an unemployment rate of 21.3%. The EU average (calculated in the current 28 EU Member States) was characterised by a much lower gap between the general and youth unemployment rate, with figures of 7.0% and 15.8% respectively. In the five years following the crisis, the youth unemployment rate almost doubled in Italy, reaching 40%, while the EU average grew in a much more limited manner, going from 15.8% to 23.6%

Worrying signs were observed also for the employment levels of young people: in 2013 the average employment rate for the 15-24 age group was 16.3%, more than eight percentage points lower than the 2008 figure. The situation worsened dramatically, going from one in four young people who were working five years ago, to less than one in six. Based on the most recent statistics, there are almost 6 million people aged 15-24 and 43.3% of them are unemployed, while 73.3% of them (almost 4.5 million people) are inactive (ISTAT, June 2014).

Furthermore, another phenomenon that is currently characterising the crisis in the entire European

Union is on the rise: the increase in the number of young people who are not working nor attending an education or training pathway (NEET). For this group of young people, a long period of exclusion from the labour market and the education system could lead to more difficulties in their reintegration. In 2013, the share of NEETs

in the 15-24 year age group was 22.2%, 5.5% higher than in 2008.

### 3. Education, participation and skills gaps

The latest OECD-PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) surveys (focusing on reading, mathematics and science) highlight that there is a lack in education attainments in terms of knowledge and skills and know-how of Italian young people. Italy's percentage of early school leavers (18.2% in 2011) is still above the European average, although it has gradually diminished from 2002 to 2007 (thanks to the education policies implemented in the late 90s) and the new target set for Italy under the Europe 2020 Strategy (15%) is within reach. For this reason, active policies, above all those which target young people, are specifically designed to prevent early school-leaving by offering alternative training opportunities and tools. Dropping-out is a problem for the education system, especially in the area of vocational training, although this phenomenon has been thwarted by different reform programmes, raising compulsory school age and introducing the right-duty to education and training to 18 years old, opening up new educational pathways at the upper secondary level.

The rising trend concerning the school attendance levels is however confirmed by the rate of population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education: it increased from 68.8% in 2005 to 70.8% in 2011. The rising indicator is particularly relevant for the percentage of women who in 2011 obtained a upper secondary school diploma (72.6% compared to the EU27 64.6%). A critical aspect is the participation of the adult population in lifelong learning activities, which is still below the European average. Between 2005 and 2011, the percentage of population aged 25-64 participating in training and



## Key data, statistics

education over the four weeks prior the survey shows a significant gap compared to the European average (3.8% in 2005 and 3.2% in 2011).

Moreover, the early empiric results<sup>4</sup> of the OECD-PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) – carried out in Italy by Isfol on appointment by and under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies – show that Italy ranks last in the classification of literacy skills, even if with respect to previous OECD surveys the gap with respect to other Coun-

Based on Isfol reports, there are 18,385 structures in Italy that provide guidance activities. 60% fall under the educational system, 21% are VET Centres and 15.8% are Employment Centres. As far as the school system is concerned, 11,000 education providers declare that they carry out guidance activities; half of these are public lower secondary schools and approximately 44% upper secondary schools, while the percentages of non-Government schools are lower. As regards the Universities, the survey confirms that in December 2011, 238 departments provided guidance services, again mostly in public universities. In the labour system there are 2,898 structures providing guidance activities, ranging from the Informagiovani (37.1%) to Public Employment Centres (24.3%), Employment Agencies (16.6%), Trade Associations (12.7%), while Guidance Centres correspond to 6%.

As far as demand is concerned, the dichotomy between a strong interest on the part of the students and a scarce use of the ser-

tries has reduced. Italy also ranks second last in numeracy skills, which are essential for dealing with and manage mathematical problems in different situations during adult life. But there are also positive aspects: the skills levels of the female segment show a very positive improvement; illiteracy is decreasing<sup>5</sup>; the differentiation range between young people and the elderly has reduced<sup>6</sup>; and finally, the gap with respect to the OECD literacy average has reduced and there has been an overall improvement of Italy's ranking with respect to other surveys carried out in recent years.

vices offered in the school system is confirmed in Isfol surveys. More than 60% of those interviewed say that they would contact a guidance centre mainly to obtain information on training and employment opportunities, 22.8% to encourage matching of employment demand and offer and 18.5% for help in finding a job. 87% of the sample group declare that they have used at least one guidance service: these are above all high school students (93%), followed by the students of vocational training (82.2%) and technical upper secondary schools (81%). These figures, compared with those of surveys carried out in previous years, show a positive trend in participation. The level of use in other fields is low, with an average of 30.7%. University guidance services are used by 43,4% of those interviewed mainly for finding information, rather than developing self-analysis and self-orientation skills which are useful to support choices and develop planning skills.

The percentage of young people who did not

4 These early empirical results refer to Italian data and the distribution of competencies in the Italian adult population aged between 16 and 65. Data were gathered in the period 2011-2012. See Isfol, The competencies for living and working today – main results of the PIAAC survey, Research paper no.9/2013, [www.isfol.it](http://www.isfol.it).

5 The percentage of the population at the lowest levels of competencies has decreased with respect to previous international surveys (IALS and ALL), the percentage below level 1 decreases from 14% to about 5.5%, while the percentage of the population at level 2 increases (from 34.5% to 42.3%).

6 The gap between the 16-24 age bracket and the 55-64 age bracket passes, for literacy, from 63 points of the previous survey to 30 points of the PIAAC, showing an improvement in the more mature age brackets.

## Legislation in Guidance

use guidance services because they had no opportunity to do so, is also interesting. On the other hand, a very high percentage said that they were not interested, making it quite clear that the demand for guidance services is above all tied to factors of need rather than choice.

The National Guidance Archive<sup>7</sup>, run by Isfol, is a database – updated to December 2011

As regards the educational sector, the Agreements among the State and the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces signed in December 2012 (on Lifelong Learning and Guidance, IFTS, Traineeship and Certification) trace a consistent national reference framework and emphasise the intent to create the conditions for a system action based on the integration of services for citizens.

As regards the employment sector, Law no. 92 on the reform of the labour market dated 2012 focuses on two topics: promoting lifelong learning and implementing a national system of competencies certification. Employment Centres must reorganise the services dedicated to unemployed people in order to reinstate them as rapidly as possible in the production world. The reform establishes which services are to be offered, indicating the essential service levels that each Employment Centre is called to provide in the assistance and guidance activities provided for employment re-entry.

### **National level**

The Agreement between the Government, the Regions and the local Entities to define the national lifelong guidance system dated 20 December 2012 provides a national refer-

– of entities that in different fields provide guidance services in Italy. Using a search form the archive may be interrogated according to specific search criteria: by region, province, city, name, system and type and, when available, by specific organisation characteristics (e.g. type of users, services supplied, tools used, professional figures involved).

reference framework that, on one hand, encourages and consolidates a common language and culture among guidance professionals and, on the other hand, strengthens and promotes an effective governance of the guidance systems involving the different actors.

The qualifying aspects of the agreement are the following:

- definition of lifelong guidance (art. 1);
- indication of the aims pursued by the national lifelong guidance system (art. 2) that are: a) development, at a national and regional level, of efficient coordination/liaison and implementation of a quality assurance system among the main lifelong guidance actors; b) centrality of individuals and their needs in the guidance activities; c) guarantee of access for all people to lifelong guidance in order to increase education and training participation and employment rates, consistently with interests and aptitudes and learning opportunities and professional requirements from the labour market; d) the support of a partnership policy and networking of lifelong guidance services, ensuring their

<sup>7</sup> [www.isfol.it/temi/Lavoro\\_professioni/orientamento-al-lavoro/archivio-nazionale-orientamento](http://www.isfol.it/temi/Lavoro_professioni/orientamento-al-lavoro/archivio-nazionale-orientamento).



### Regional Level

According to the Agreement for the definition of the national lifelong guidance system dated 20 December 2012, the Regions implement the life-long guidance policies complying with the general guidelines, the agreed form of intervention, integration and organisation, taking into account the territorial specificity and ensuring the active involvement of the local, social and economic stakeholders.

quality and ongoing improvement consistently with the needs of people; e) the development of a common language and culture among the actors of the guidance system;

- definition of the governance of the guidance system at different levels (arts. 3, 4).

A National and Inter-Institutional Committee for Lifelong Guidance was also created, through the above mentioned agreement, with the following functions:

- development of general guidelines and proposals to identify the minimum standards for guidance services and professional competencies of operators, with respect to the existing guidance activities and functions in different territorial contexts and educational, training and employment systems;
- definition of monitoring tools for the implementation of guidance interventions and policies.

The Committee organises periodic meetings with the Social Partners in order to ensure their participation and information during the preparation stages of the proposals.

A qualifying aspect of the agreement is the definition of the system governance at different levels, which include:

- a national coordination and integration between all the actors who work in the field of guidance, which ended up with the elaboration of national Guidance Guidelines (approved by the State-Regions Conference on 5th of December 2013) and the identification of the minimum service standards and professional competencies of operators;
- a territorial level that, under the shared framework of the national system, defines lifelong guidance policies according to the local needs (arts. 3, 4).

In different Regions, the integration of guidance services in the fields of education, training and labour, is realized at the providers level. The regional administration approves yearly an activities plan, identifying guidance services (information desk, guidance consulting service, psychological counselling, technical assistance to schools and territorial networks), human and financial resources, technical/operative actions and implementation times and gives the providers the function of horizontal coordination of the guidance activities carried out by other systems.

The regions therefore implement the following actions: planning guidance actions, e.g. support actions for the regional guidance services system and services for people.

### **Sectorial level**

The measures adopted with the labour market reform (Law 92/2012) intend to promote the creation of territorial networks, as organic tools for boosting economic growth and managing the resources available in the area, including education, training and employment, with the aim of promoting access of young people, active ageing, active citizenship even by immigrants. Consistently with the regional competencies the principle of subsidiarity and after consultation with the Social Partners, the guidelines to identify the general principles and priorities to promote and support the networks must be implemented. Thanks to this approach, the knowledge and competencies in the territories are taken into account in a "local" key. When identifying the training requirements of adult workers with jobs at risk or young people entering the labour market, the Employment Services must take into account the competencies required by the local production systems, mainly the key competencies. Therefore some tools and procedures have been developed in different areas, to better read the local training needs and matching demand and supply in the labour market that focuses on the growth of the local industries and implies the involvement of the sectors social partners.

The stakeholders involved in the governance of the Italian guidance system are the following:

- the Ministry of Education, University and Research that is responsible for setting the minimum public service performance levels (Livelli Essenziali delle Prestazioni – LEP) for guidance in the education system;
- the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies that is responsible for setting the minimum public service performance levels (Livelli Essenziali delle Prestazioni – LEP) for guidance in vocational training and Public Employment Systems (PES);
- the Regions and Autonomous Provinces that are the administrations in charge of planning, organising and supplying guidance in VET and PES;
- the Social Partners that contribute to designing and organising active labour policies and particularly guidance policies.

These stakeholders coordinate the activities of the following sub-systems: schools, universities, vocational training centres and employment centres. Ministries also have an active role in providing lifelong guidance services, all over Italy. The Ministry of Education, University and Research runs two websites: [www.universitaly.it](http://www.universitaly.it) and [www.istruzione.it/orientamento](http://www.istruzione.it/orientamento), to provide guidance for young people in their choice of university and schools study pathways. While, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies has created two guidance portals: [www.cliclavoro.gov.it](http://www.cliclavoro.gov.it) and [www.garanziagiovani.gov.it](http://www.garanziagiovani.gov.it), that provides



information, links and useful addresses regarding guidance, training opportunities and work.

Other organizations in the public and private sectors throughout Italy provide information and/or guidance services. Some of these focus specifically on work placement or encourage entrepreneurship; others address specific categories such as young people, women, immigrants, etc. A brief description of some organizations might convey an idea of both the complexity of the system and the number of services available, given that Italy has many local services that vary from one local authority to another. The main local providers of guidance services are:

- C.I.L.O. (so-called Local Career Guidance Information Centres) and COL (so-called Career Guidance Centres). The guidance counsellors and employees who work in these centres provide career guidance and promote the creation and development of new businesses;
- Informagiovani centres are provincial or municipal structures that may be found in nearly all Italian towns and cities. They provide a range of information for young people regarding training, voluntary services, local cultural initiatives, European mobility programmes, etc. This free service allows young people to find help in

making the most appropriate decisions and choices in regard to their training and employment. Well trained advisors with considerable expertise are on hand at the Informagiovani centres to help young people find and select information, and to provide useful advice to help them with their decisions.

The Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture are institutions at provincial level whose goal is to develop the general interests of the business world and the local economy by bringing together and reconciling the needs of the main sectors represented by the trade associations. The most important fields of intervention for the Chambers of Commerce are internationalisation, training, technological innovation, quality certification, and the development of advanced services for businesses, especially for small and medium sized enterprises. For aspiring and new entrepreneurs, guidance services, information, consulting services and assistance to start up businesses are provided by the Chamber of Commerce. Private organisations may also provide guidance services: employment agencies authorized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, training organisations, social cooperatives, foundations, no-profit organisations, trade unions and trade associations employers organizations.



## Guidance for Early Childhood

Guidance in pre-schools is intended as a qualified support for the healthy and creative insertion of children in society. It is therefore a complex process that involves various dimensions of the life of a child and is developed with reference to the Ministerial Directives.

The general aims are as follows:

- to strengthen personal identity, from a physical, intellectual, psycho-dynamic and social point of view;
- to develop the ability to find their own way and make autonomous choices in different relationship and regulatory contexts;
- to trigger personal aptitudes, competencies and skills;
- to identify early signs of cognitive and emotional-relational problems.

These activities are generally carried out by associations and training organizations according to school guidance projects at schools, in collaboration with other public and private organisations involved at local level.



Guidance, as an institutional activity of schools of any level, is an integral part of the study curricula and, more generally, of the educational and training process right from preschool. Art. 1 of Directive no. 487 dated 6 August 1997 of the Ministry of Education, in defining guidance as a fundamental structural component of the lifelong learning process, assigns to preschool and elementary school the task of activating a process whose aim is the progressive personal growth, intended as an awareness of one's self and the global accrual of planning skills.

The Ministry of Education re-launched the theme of guidance at the end of 2008 with the creation of the Technical-Scientific Committee (Departmental Decree no. 40 dated 31 July 2008), whose aim was to prepare the guidelines for the realisation of guidance pathways in schools of any level and disseminate a new concept of guidance as a strategy that invests people, throughout their life, via the educational process right from primary school and is transversal to all disciplines.

The strategy of the National Guidance Plan, intended as an ongoing process, is clearly outlined by Ministerial Circular no. 43 dated 15 April 2009. This strategy rests mainly on the following principles: to accompany the professional growth of teachers, disseminating a concept of lifelong training guidance as well as new active and engaging teaching methods, while fostering dialogue with other institutional bodies in the territory, including companies, the labour and vocational training worlds.

To encourage this dialogue and share a joint

strategy, the National Forum for Lifelong Guidance was created with Departmental Decree no. 54 dated 26 October 2009.

In order to make guidance interventions more efficient, school boards may adopt organisational structures such as disciplinary departments, research groups and work commissions; school directors at provincial level promote the development of interinstitutional relations with universities, local organisations and the other public and private organisations involved.

Recent Law no. 128/2013 by the Ministry of Education containing: "Urgent measures on education, university and research" intervenes in the field of scholastic dropping out and guidance for students. This law allocates 6.6 million for the realisation of guidance pathways for students of upper secondary schools. All teachers will be involved in the process. Even Chambers of Commerce, Employment agencies and Associations registered with the Forum of student associations may be involved. Guidance should be offered in the last year of lower secondary schools and as from the fourth year of high school even from the perspective of the European "Youth Guarantee Initiative". Schools must enter their proposals both in the Training Offer Plan and on their website. Measures will also be provided to make students aware of the educational and training value of work, even through training days at companies. In particular, the guidance pathways for students and intervention plans for the realisation of traineeships with companies, will include the following measures: training days at companies for high

## Guidance and Apprenticeships

school students, above all in the case of vocational and technical schools; higher apprenticeships in the technical high school courses, even through financial initiatives provided by regional authorities.

Isfol reports on guidance in Italy confirm the tendency of schools to plan guidance activities locally, as support to teaching courses, mainly involving the class group, in line both with regulatory directives and with the mission of the educational system in order to prepare students for the choices they are

The Ministry of Labour has strongly re-launched the role of apprenticeship – an employment contract whose aim is to train and employ young people, renewed by Legislative Decree no. 167 dated 14 September 2011 (Unified Apprenticeship Text) – with the activation of a national portal [www.nuovoapprendistato.gov.it](http://www.nuovoapprendistato.gov.it) and various actions whose aim was to disseminate awareness of the contract, its application and strengthen the governance system, involving young people, companies, employment consultants, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces and Social Partners.

Young people may:

- obtain information and guidance thanks

called to make. Guidance practices are prevalently of a teaching nature (mainly in classrooms) and there is less use of specific spaces dedicated to more consulting-like guidance activities. In some cases, the lack of institutional resources – financial and human – makes it impossible to apply the guidance strategies in full, so that interventions of an occasional nature prevail, often associated to urgent individual requests. In schools, operators underline the need to strengthen the role of the guidance professionals.

to the above portal, which has sections dedicated to young people, companies and experts for the three types of apprenticeships (apprenticeship for professional diploma and qualification, professional training apprenticeship and higher and research apprenticeship), and may also obtain information on initiatives at local level in the section dedicated to Regions/Autonomous Provinces;

- contact employment services, guidance and information centres that are often available in schools or universities, the information desks of employment agencies, including temporary employment agencies, or Informagiovani centres.



## Guidance in Adult Learning/Continuous Training

The Regulation containing the general rules to redefine the teaching organisation structure of Educational Centres for Adults (ECA), including evening courses (Presidential Decree no. 263 dated 29 October 2012) was implemented in the years 2013/2014. This regulation transforms the old centres into autonomous school institutions with a specific teaching and organisational structure and Collegial Organisation, constituted at a Provincial level.

ECAs are structured in territorial service networks and will operate in close liaison with local autonomies, the labour and professional world, activating training pathways structured by learning levels. The regulation also establishes that the passage to the new system should be accompanied by guidelines to define, in particular, the structuring criteria, the teaching methods and organisational system in terms of credit recognition, customization of the study course at the different level, remote attendance to part of the course for no more than 20% of the total number of hours, individual admission and the provision of guidance services in order to define the Training Agreement for no more than 10% of the total number of course hours.

## Guidance in Higher Education

Governance of school-university and university-labour world transitions is a topical theme for Italian universities that has encouraged them to extend the services offered by providing guidance before, during and after graduation. Under the drive of EU initiatives which aimed at reforming education and vocational training policies, towards a closer liaison with the labour market, universities escaped their isolation and opened themselves to the production system, establishing relations and connections faster for the employment of their graduates, through placement offices and services. "Job placement" is today widespread in university contexts, with a substantially uniform organisation and services. In particular, job placement activities, such as demand-supply intermediation or placing CVs in the network, are characterized by centralized management. The staff endowment of Italian university placement services is often made up by administration personnel.



Under the reform of the labour market (Law 92/2012), Employment Centres are called to reorganise the services for unemployed people, in order to make them re-enter the production world as quickly as possible. The reform establishes the services that must be provided, indicating the minimum levels of service that the centres must offer, when assisting workers to re-enter the employment world.

More specifically:

- a) the first guidance interview must take place within three months from the start of unemployment;
- b) individual or collective guidance actions must be carried out in a period of between three and six months and, in the same period, workers must be given some training in order to help them to find employment;
- c) in a period of 6 to 12 months, people

who failed to find a new job receive an income relief and may attend a training course, to update them on the professional skills that may be used in the local production system;

- d) within the expiry of the income relief received the Employment Service should make a proposal of employment re-entry.

Moreover, in the case of workers suspended from work, on a layoff benefit fund of no more than six months, the Employment Services offer a training course appropriate to the professional skills of the unemployed worker. The training lever for updating workers with job problems, together with the guidance lever, is more decisive, in that unemployed workers must attend the training courses proposed by the services, failing which they will lose the treatment.



## Others (Health, Active Citizenship)

The development of services for people in order to promote social participation and active citizenship, psycho-physical health and active ageing is positioned between active labour and social inclusion policies. The structures that provide these services are above all public organisations, namely those promoted by the central and peripheral apparatuses of the State or local territorial administrations, even if the role of religious institutions, voluntary organisations and private social associations is by no means negligible. These structures have very different intervention models and are present with a different importance in the territory.

These services may be distinguished as:

- social services, that provide specific social-health and educational-welfare assistance, with specific support to people (suffering from marginalisation, addiction, disabilities, etc.);
- services for the civil society, which develop: social networks, territorial culture, knowledge and training with respect to the context, development of a sense of cohesion and belonging through interests that activate the person, involving him or her directly in the territorial social process, active participation and awareness of common problems.

## Quality assurance (standards, indicators, accreditation system)

### Quality assurance (standards, indicators, accreditation systems)

The accreditation of vocational training and guidance institutions is one of the main tools for selecting the organisations that wish to provide training or guidance services, and consequently the main instrument to shape the territorial guidance system available to the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, which are the institutional bodies responsible for ensuring the quality of publicly funded training. The accreditation model defined by the national agreement between the State and Regions that took place in 2008<sup>8</sup>.

In the perspective of structuring the Italian National System and defining National standards for guidance provision, a relevant step forward is represented by the Agreement between Government, Regions and local Entities, approved during the Unified Conference on 13 November 2014, on the definition of the minimum standards of services and competences of guidance professionals based on the functions and services of guidance at present existing in territorial contexts and in the Education, Training and Labour systems.

<sup>8</sup> Agreement signed by the Ministry of Education, University and Research, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, to define the minimum standards of the new accreditation system of training structures for the quality of services. It follows and re-designs the previous models of the accreditation system established in 2001.

The guidance professional is an all-round profile, who deals with planning guidance action, provides information and counselling. In general, the guidance professional's task is to help people to plan their school/training programme and/or career.

In school guidance, the professionals (mainly teachers) plan, manage and integrate interventions in the study curriculum to improve the guiding strengths of disciplines and initiatives so that students make choices most suited to their personality and plans for their future.

In VET, the professionals coordinate and plan guidance interventions in training structures in order to encourage motivational processes, self-employment and confidence in dealing with problems on the labour market. To do this, the guidance professional carries out a wide range of activities: he or she provides information, organises and manages group guidance and training programmes, interviews people, promotes traineeships, makes skills assessments.

The Employment Centre operators work mainly in two areas:

- for users who are seeking a job: they provide reception and information, individual guidance interviews, match employment demand and supply, provide specific services for disabled and disad-

vantaged people;

- for companies: they provide information and consultancy regarding legislation, employment incentives and subsidies, handle pre-recruitment and communicate names for possible employment candidates and advertise job offers.

Guidance professionals work in a number of schools, at university guidance centres, vocational training centres, public and private Employment Centres. In the case of public organisations, the guidance professional is mainly an employee on a permanent employment contract. In private organisations, he/she may be an employee on a permanent contract, a fixed-term contract or even an advisor on a project-based contract. Working times are generally 36 hours a week according to the applied collective agreement. Some flexibility is however necessary in working times in order to meet the requirements of users.

In his or her work, the guidance professional deals above all with the beneficiaries of guidance interventions: young school age persons, high school certificate holders, university graduates, adults seeking jobs or re-placement, as well as with lower secondary and high school teachers, university lecturers, labour market experts, economists, labour psychologists, trade union and trade association representatives, officials of local bodies.



## Training of Guidance professionals

To become a guidance professional, a specific academic qualification is not compulsory. In order to work efficiently, this operator may have a university degree, preferably in humanistic studies or psychological social sciences (for example, pedagogy/training sciences, political sciences, psychology, sociology), and possibly a post-graduate specialisation course. For this job, experience and on-the-job learning are both very important.

According to a survey carried out by Isfol in 2011, 63% of the trainers who work in VET training pathways (which include also professionals in guidance) have a university degree, around 30% a high school diploma and only 7% a qualification certificate. The specific training opportunities for this professional profile are still somewhat limited.

The Public Administration is however currently introducing requalification programmes for personnel who work at the Employment Centres. Moreover, in recent years, specific courses and first and second level master's courses in professional guidance

have been introduced in many Italian universities. The need to guarantee a guidance service based on innovation and quality is confirmed by the laws that permit the accreditation of training and guidance providers.

The accreditation systems designed by the Regions for those involved in guidance and training activities defines the minimum professional skills standards of guidance professionals and other operators involved in training or guidance activities, thus providing a basis to create a description and certification system harmonised at a national level. In this framework, many Regions have set the criteria for guidance professionals, although a systematic and coordinated definition of the profiles is still necessary.

Within this framework, Isfol has carried out a great deal of research on professional guidance profiles, identifying functions, professional practices, skills and training programmes. Guidance professional associations<sup>9</sup> also provide indications in this regard.



<sup>9</sup> The Associazione Nazionale Orientatori (ASNOR - National Association of Guidance Professionals) has issued a national register for guidance professionals and manages a structured ongoing certification and training system, in collaboration with organisations, associations, institutions, schools and universities. The Società italiana per l'orientamento (SIO - Italian Guidance Association) includes teachers, university researchers and professionals who work in the field of guidance. The Associazione Italiana Professionisti dell'Orientamento (AS-SIPRO - Italian Association of Guidance Professionals) has created the "Register of Italian Guidance Operators". Assipro intends to develop national standards for the main guidance actions and training of professionals, to become a point of reference for ethical issues that may occur in providing, organising and managing these activities.

In Italy, studies and researches on lifelong guidance are carried out by public and private bodies. At a national level Isfol<sup>10</sup>, as Public Research Institute supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, realises surveys and analyses on labour market, vocational education and training and continuing vocational training as well as skills and competences in a lifelong learning and guidance perspective.

The Institute's main tasks are:

- to carry out research projects in the statutory fields (vocational training, labour market and social inclusion);
- to provide annual monitoring and evaluation reports;
- to cooperate at a European and international level with similar organizations.

Moreover, Isfol's research activity about education and vocational training includes: certification of competences, certification transparency, quality in the vocational training systems, guidance, traineeship and apprenticeship. While the research activity related to the Labour Market includes: monitoring of reforms, monitoring of PES, implementation of the European Employment Strategy and regional employment policies, research projects on job mobility and quality, fight against undeclared work policies, analysis of labour market trends and dynamics of job demand and supply, social inclusion.

Isfol also hosts the main EU networks for mobility and guidance, e.g. the National Centre Euroguidance Italy, the National Centre Europass, the National Contact Point EQF

and delegates from the National team of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network<sup>11</sup> (ELGPN). Networks and contact points, that carry out research activities for National, Regional and Local Authorities, experiment new methodologies and tools and follow the implementation of EU programmes, projects and initiatives.

At national level, also INDIRE<sup>12</sup>, as National Research Institute supervised by the Ministry of Education, elaborates information about guidance provided in the national education system. The institute's main tasks are:

- to carry out research projects in the educational field;
- to provide students, teachers and decision makers with information about educational systems, projects and technologies;
- to facilitate educational innovation and dissemination of best practices;
- to manage e-learning environments for in-service training and initial training for teachers and school and other school personnel.

INDIRE hosts Eurydice Italy. The Eurydice Network<sup>13</sup> is the Education Information Network in Europe. It consists of a coordinating European Unit and a series of national units; its aim is to provide policymakers in the Member States with up-to-date and reliable information on which to base policy decisions in the field of education. Eurydice Italy also provides information for Eurypedia<sup>14</sup> which is a new product of the Eurydice Network that aims at presenting the most accurate picture of National Education systems, with information also about guidance,

10 [www.isfol.it/temi/Lavoro\\_professionisti/copy\\_of\\_progetti/orientamento-al-lavoro](http://www.isfol.it/temi/Lavoro_professionisti/copy_of_progetti/orientamento-al-lavoro).

11 <https://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/elgpn>.

12 [www.indire.it](http://www.indire.it).

13 [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php).

14 [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tpfms/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Main\\_Page](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tpfms/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Main_Page).

across Europe.

At national level, Euroguidance Italy (<http://www.lsfol.it/euroguidance>) is promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Centre is located in Isfol. The National Centre Euroguidance, in synergy with other research groups, cooperates in promoting the European Area of Skills and Qualifications. In particular, Isfol's cooperation and collaboration takes place through partnerships and memberships with the following networks and contact points at national and European level:

- Euroguidance (<http://euroguidance.eu>), a network of Centres linking together the Careers Guidance systems in Europe. Euroguidance promotes mobility, helping guidance counsellors and individuals to better understand the opportunities available to EU citizens throughout Europe;
- Europass (<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/home>), a network of the National Europass Centres (NEC) that coordinates the promotion of the Europass documents;
- EQAVET (<http://www.eqavet.eu>), a community of practice bringing together Member States, Social Partners and the European Commission to promote European collaboration in developing and

improving quality assurance in VET by using the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework;

- ELGPN ([www.elgpn.eu](http://www.elgpn.eu)) a network that aims at assisting Member States (and the neighbouring countries eligible for the EU Lifelong Learning Programme) and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors;
- EQF ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqf\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqf_en.htm)), a network of the National Contact Points of EQF that aims at relating the national qualifications systems of different countries to a common European reference framework;
- Cedefop-Refernet ([www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/Refernet/index.aspx](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/Refernet/index.aspx)), a network of institutions created by Cedefop in 2002 to provide information on national vocational education and training (VET) systems and policies in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

The interconnection and link of the above mentioned networks ensures exchange of information and best practices related to guidance systems and practices at international, national and regional level.

This publication has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Editors and authors:

**Sandra D'Agostino**, ISFOL and **Concetta Fonzo**, ISFOL.

Printed by Revelox snc ([www.revelox.it](http://www.revelox.it))

**Rome, Italy, December 2014**



 **euro | guidance**  
European Network to Support  
Guidance and Counselling

**Euroguidance Italy**  
**c/o Isfol**  
Corso d'Italia, 33  
00198 Rome – Italy  
Tel. + 39 06 85447048

Coordinator  
**Ismene tramontano**

Staff  
**Concetta Fonzo, Silvia Lotito,**  
**Giulia Tosi**

website  
[www.isfol.it/euroguidance](http://www.isfol.it/euroguidance)  
email  
[euroguidance@isfol.it](mailto:euroguidance@isfol.it)